



THE
DRAKEFORD
HOUSE



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H I S T O R Y

The little log house standing nearest the Town Wall at the Historic Camden visitors' center was originally located about twelve miles north of Camden near Granny's Quarter Creek in the Flat Rock community. Tradition holds that it was built there about 1812 by Richard Drakeford, whose descendants now own the site. Intensive research, while not definitely proving that he was the builder, has produced no valid disclaimer either - hence the name "The Drakeford House."

The land on which this house was built was originally surveyed in 1794 for one John Coats. Coats, however, did not acquire the property, settling instead somewhat to the north. The first title was held by Lewis Cook who in 1806 received 285 acres in a grant from Governor Pinckney. Two years later Cook sold this grant to John Booker, who in January 1812 sold 100 acres of it to Richard Drakeford.

One source reports that Richard Drakeford was born in Prince William County, Virginia, about 1750 and came to Kershaw County with his father, John Drakeford, about 1754. Another claims he came from Fairfax County, Virginia with his brother John. At any rate, it is on record that he had a brother named John and that both brothers fought in the Revolution, Richard sustaining a severe head wound.

At the time he bought the land from Lewis Cook, Richard Drakeford already owned substantial acreage in the Flat Rock section. The

house he built on the Cook grant is typical of those erected in that area of Kershaw County in the early 19th century except that a nicety of detail and finish sets it a bit apart. The beautifully turned interior staircase and well fitted wall and roof members (marked with hacked Roman numerals for matching) attest to a discriminating mind.

This first Richard Drakeford was a man of some means and at his death in 1826 left a sizeable estate. The amount of furniture (walnut tables, cupboards, four sets of bedroom furniture, a pine writing table, mirror, eleven chairs, and two sets of fireplace equipment) makes one wonder where it was all kept. However, as Richard Drakeford was by this time an old man it may be that he was living elsewhere with one of his seven daughters at the time of his death; this is suggested by the wording of his will. An additional two rooms (discarded in reconstruction) were of a later date than Richard Drakeford's lifetime and there is no record of a more imposing early Drakeford dwelling than this simple log cabin.

All of Richard Drakeford's land was bequeathed to his only son, William Scott Drakeford. "Colonel" Drakeford" (it is believed the title was complimentary as no evidence of military service has been found) was a Mason and apparently served as something of a "squire" in the neighborhood. It is interesting to note that he was the administrator of the estate of one David Bartling of Pennsylvania, who died in Kershaw County in 1822 after a residence of three years as Master Builder of Bethesda Presbyterian Church. William Drakeford had a family of four daughters and three sons.

How long he occupied the log house is not known. He died in 1871, a year after the death of his son Richard Columbus Drakeford who apparently was living there at the time of his death. The inventories of the estates of both William and Richard C. Drakeford suggest that William may have been living with one of his daughters, while Richard, who with his brother Joseph James held a lease on all their father's land, was probably occupying the house and farming the land. (Joseph James Drakeford had previously moved to Fort Mill, S. C.) This opinion is borne out by the wording in the next title to the land when, in 1906, the sons and daughters of Richard C. Drakeford devised the property to one brother in a deed referring to the site as a tract "whereon is located the residence of our father, the late R. C. Drakeford."

The property has passed through two more generations and is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Drakeford of Columbia, S. C.

R E S T O R A T I O N

When Mr. and Mrs. Drakeford learned that the Camden District Heritage Foundation wished to relocate a log house at the visitors' center to hold museum exhibits, they generously offered this one which had been in the family for over 150 years.

It was decided that the only feasible way to relocate the house was by dismantling it completely and reassembling it. The S. C. Department of Corrections provided a work crew under the supervision of Mr. Ronald Brown for this job.

Detailed drawings were made of the original structure; then each separate piece was carefully marked and removed before being loaded on a truck for transportation to the new site.

The Drakeford house as it now stands approximates its original appearance in 1812. A back shed room and a front porch with one end enclosed had been added some time later but in restoring it was decided to stay with the original design of one room with sleeping loft.

Wherever possible the original materials were used in reconstruction. Where replacement was necessary materials from other old buildings were used.

Some missing window frames and shutters were made to match salvaged originals. The new doors were made to match the original west door. Old glass was used throughout and reproduction hardware patterned on the original was installed.

The old hearth had disintegrated so a new one was designed. The mantel was donated from an old house in Cheraw, S. C.

The pickets and rails of the staircase visible from the first floor are original, with replacements made further up from old materials.

The old flooring had to be replaced - regrettably, because wear marks believed caused by the action of a loom and by the steady motion of a rocking chair were plainly visible in the original floor.

A front and a back stoop were improvised, so that the Drakeford house, now embarking on a new life of service to Kershaw Countians, appears much as it did when Richard Drakeford built it early in the 19th century.

M U S E U M

The Historic Camden museum exhibits in the Drakeford House center around the colonial and Revolutionary history of Camden. A chronological account of the events of 1780-81, when the town was occupied by the British under Lord Cornwallis, is given.

The home of Camden's founder Joseph Kershaw, which was used by Cornwallis as headquarters, has been reproduced in a scale model, as has the Northeast Redoubt, one of eight such structures built around Camden by the British; both these models are displayed here. Shadow boxes hold exhibits of guns, bullets, pottery, and other relics of the Revolutionary period uncovered in the Historic Camden area by archaeological excavations.

D R A K E F O R D F A M I L Y

The Drakeford family is represented by a large number of descendants, many bearing other surnames. The daughters of the first Richard Drakeford married men named Cochran, Evans, Layton, McDowell, McLester, and Sanders. Their brother William had three sons and five daughters. Three of the latter married, their husbands being William Perry, James Reed, and Dr. John I. Trantham.

Of the three sons, William H. Drakeford apparently had no children; Richard Columbus left, besides two sons, two daughters whose

husbands' names were Haile and Watkins; while Joseph James, the third son, had several children, of whom two sons had descendants.

The Heritage Foundation would like to obtain further information or corrections regarding the Drakeford descendants.

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